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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE POOR OF THE *Metropolis and other populous Places;* AND FOR THE DIRECTION OF THEIR LABOURS TO THE **Benefit of the Inhabitants:**

RESPECTFULLY ADDRESSED TO, AND PUBLISHED BY
PERMISSION OF,
His Royal Highness the Duke of YORK,
Commander in Chief of the Forces, &c. and Chairman of
the Association for the Relief of the Poor.

By FARMER MEANWELL,
AUTHOR OF "THE ANTIDOTE TO DISTRESS."

I ask not the cause of distress, but I seek the remedy; that remedy
is to be found in employment, and from no other source can permanent
relief arise.

Vide ANTIDOTE TO DISTRESS.

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A LETTER,

&c. &c.

May it please Your Royal Highness,

WHEN I contemplate the glorious and important advantages which have resulted from the energy incited by Your Royal Highness throughout the department over which you so ably preside; when I reflect upon the benevolent spirit so fully manifested by every branch of the Royal Family, particularly at the present time of temporary and unavoidable distress, I feel a hope, that I shall not incur censure, by soliciting the honour of attention to the following suggestions, and to the pamphlet entitled *The Antidote to Distress*: their avowed objects being—to promote the effectual relief of the poor by employment, and to direct their labours to the promotion of public and private advantages.

I am particularly induced to address the following outlines to Your Royal Highness, from the zeal you have evinced for the public good, as Commander in Chief of the Forces, and as Chairman of the Association for the Relief of

the Poor. I feel persuaded that they will not be the less graciously received, from being unsupported by any other claims to attention, than the cause of the needy, and the earnest endeavours of an humble individual.

I deem it necessary to state, that, near twelve months since, I did myself the honour of addressing to Your Royal Highness, through the official department, a plan for providing a full supply of green food for cavalry and draft horses during the summer months: the advantages proposed being, to promote health; to prepare for campaign service; and to maintain any number of horses on the home station with a great reduction of expense: the main points of the system having met the decided approbation of the Veterinary Surgeon General. I had also in view, at that time, the employment of the poor by the creation of manual labour.

The particular attention I had paid to this subject, and knowledge arising from local circumstances, enabled me distinctly to point out causes, why the service could not be supplied with that most desirable food lucerne by the usual system of contracts for short periods: and also, that, in thus obtaining supplies of other articles, as tares, there was a great liability to impositions; double the price being sometimes paid, from necessity, at which superior food might be obtained by other means.

The decision ultimately obtained was, that the extensive reduction of cavalry and draft horses had considerably abridged the utility of the measures proposed, but that the plan and observations would be preserved and registered, as deserving attention whenever circumstances arose to cause an increase of horses employed.

In the various conferences I was honoured with by persons holding official situations, I found, that considerable objections arose to departing from the usual system of obtaining supplies by contract. These objections have been kept in view in the subsequent attention which I have paid to these subjects; and I am induced to hope, that, under Your Royal Highness's protection, acting in a twofold capacity, a plan may be arranged, and early adopted, by which three very important objects may be united and advantageously accomplished.

First, The creation of available employ for any number of the poor of the metropolis, as far as manual labour in agriculture can be brought to their aid; which labour may be extended or contracted, as the situation of the poor may require, horse-labour being substituted when the healing hand of time shall restore the wonted sources of employment.

Secondly, The direction of these labours to the general benefit of the inhabitants of the metropolis and its vicinity—without interfer-

ing, in any material degree, with the interest of individuals—by providing, at a reduced cost, a full and regular supply of the most nutritious and healthy green food for horses and cows during the summer months, and a supply of vegetable food for cows during the winter: thus that necessary article milk will be improved in quality, and the quantity increased to meet any demand, which cannot fail to moderate the price. In addition to the advantage afforded to horse-masters, by being enabled to keep their horses in able and healthy condition, at a reduced expense, in their own stables; a farther general benefit will be afforded, by the establishment of a Green-Food Depôt for the reception of horses, to be renovated and brought into condition, on reasonable terms, under proper superintendence and approved management.

And, *thirdly*, The providing a full supply of superior green food, at a very reduced expense to the public service, for any number of cavalry and draft horses stationed in London and the vicinity, which may be extended to Woolwich and other places, *without departing from the contract system*.

In doing myself the honour of soliciting attention to those passages of *The Antidote to Distress* which relate to these subjects, and more fully explain my designs, I beg to ob-

serve, that the suggestions contained in that tract arose from extensive agricultural practice and attentive observation. They were written in retirement, without any connection with the sentiments of others, and almost without a knowledge that others had written upon the same subjects.

My first design was, to impress a just sense of the actual situation of the lower class, from the want of employment. But it soon became evident, that the public feeling was alive to their distress ; and I discovered, that the point of utility lay in directing those feelings to the affording relief by that most rational and beneficial mode, Employment.

From an impartial review of the past and present state of agriculture, and remarks upon the probable effects of the change, I strenuously endeavoured to point out, to all classes and occupations in society, the vital importance of supporting and continuing agricultural improvements, and the increase of produce from our own soil; whereby alone available employ can be created, and a full supply of food insured to our rapidly increasing population at a steady and reasonable price.

Led on by the importance of this subject, I endeavoured to engage the interests as well as the benevolence of individuals in the cause of employment, more particularly the owners and

occupiers of land, by pointing out the private advantages which must result from certain improvements, and suggesting various modes of carrying those improvements into effect; hoping thereby to create an extension of employment generally throughout the country.

The lengthened attention I have paid to these points, and all I have yet heard from the suggestions of others, concur in producing the full conviction in my mind, that, however necessary it may be to create employ by public or associated means in particular places, where there is a great excess of unemployed poor, the most prompt and efficacious relief will be found to arise from the spirited exertions of individuals generally throughout the kingdom.

I earnestly wish to see public encouragement and effective assistance afforded to these private exertions for the promotion of manual labour; it being evident, that money thus thrown into circulation must have the most beneficial effects, by being paid weekly into the hands of those who must pass it directly to small tradesmen and others, for the supply of their present wants: thus, by the increase of the consumption of provisions and wares, and the circulation of money, the most effectual assistance must be afforded to trade, manufactures, and all branches of the community.

I am the more desirous of seeing this public

assistance given, and these individual exertions in the cause of employment promptly and generally commenced, as they must afford to the poor means of embracing the advantages of the institutions so benevolently and patriotically designed, with a view of enabling the labouring class to rise above the errors and degradation of pauperism.

It affords me no small gratification to learn, from private information, and from various inquiries and communications received through the channel pointed out in the postscript of *The Antidote*, that my agricultural suggestions are already acting upon in various directions, particularly the cultivation of lucerne; and that the sound cause of employment is thereby in a fair way to be promoted.

By referring to *The Antidote to Distress*, page 47, observations will be found on the creation of agricultural employ for those who have hitherto been accustomed to other work, but whose temporary distress, from the decline of their own line of labour, renders such borrowed employ necessary. This case is particularly applicable to the poor of the metropolis and other populous places, and the present season of the year is most favourable for giving encouragement to those who are industriously inclined, but who cannot obtain such employ under farmers and gardeners, from their inexperience in such work.

It is therefore humbly proposed to allot such a portion or portions of land as may be deemed necessary, and in such situations near the metropolis as upon inspection may be judged proper, to be cultivated in the first instance by manual labour, expressly for the growth of such vegetables and grasses as experience has proved to be the best green food for horses and cows ; whereby the inexperienced may be *taught* to earn their own support by the cultivation of the earth, and their labours be directed to the production of valuable articles, at present unknown in the London markets, though extensively cultivated in various parts of the country with the greatest advantage.

By this direction of labour, the interests of individuals cannot be materially injured ; which must infallibly be the case if the labours of the poor were thus extensively employed to produce, and bring into the market, articles in common growth by the industrious gardener and farmer, whose interests have suffered a severe depression since the return of peace, even in the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

From every inquiry I have been able to make, and the opinions of several respectable horse-masters and cow-keepers, it appears, that a full and regular supply of healthy green food is an object of considerable importance ; and that the demand will rise as the supply is produced, and confidence established that it may be depended

upon regularly at just weight and a moderate price.

My own practice, and a knowledge of the system adopted by many of our best farmers in various parts of the country, enable me to say, that a supply of the most nutritious and healthy food may thus be produced, to meet the most extended demand ; and also, that, under proper direction and agricultural management, the prospect of pecuniary receipts affords strong ground for believing, that such an establishment would not only be able to create very extensive employ at the present time, but also to repay, in a very short period, any expense incurred at the commencement; even if it were found necessary to purchase land, or to pay rent for land hired upon a long lease, for this purpose.

With these impressions on my mind, and anxious to avoid trespassing upon the funds already subscribed for the relief of the necessitous, or upon the public money, *unless there should be any available source with which I am unacquainted*, I have the honour to suggest, that the sum necessary for the prompt execution of these designs may be raised by the promotion of an extensive *Subscription Loan* by the nobility, gentlemen, horse-masters, cow-keepers, and inhabitants of the metropolis and its vicinity, interested in obtaining the supply, and zealous in the sound cause of promoting relief by employment.

The amount of subscriptions to be unlimited, but no subscription to be less than twenty shillings.

Subscribers to be entitled to a supply of produce, and to place their own horses at the Green-Food Depôt for renovation, at a regulated price, in preference to non-subscribers.

Subscribers beyond a certain amount to be members of the general committee, and entitled to recommend persons for employment.

The institution to be placed under the direction of a president, vice-presidents, and a committee, to be chosen from the list of subscribers; who shall appoint all superintendents and assistants, form such regulations as may be deemed necessary, manage all concerns, and make public reports from time to time, regular meetings being held for these purposes.

When the institution shall be fully established, and the produce regularly brought to market, all receipts, over and above the current expenses, to be applied to the repayment of the subscriptions, at the discretion of the committee.

The sums thus raised by the subscription loan being paid off, and all other claims on the institution discharged, the future net profits to be applied to the support of such public charities, institutions, and works as may be deemed most serviceable to the community; especial care being at all times taken, to promote the

original design of *creating useful employment for the poor in times of temporary distress.*

I have to represent to Your Royal Highness, that the declared opinions of various intelligent and respectable persons lead me to believe, that these measures would become popular, and that the necessary funds would thus be raised with great facility, if Your Royal Highness would condescend to become the patron of the institution.

I trust I shall be pardoned for venturing to suggest, in the cause of the poor and needy, that great encouragement would be given, and the accomplishment of these public advantages much accelerated, if His Royal Highness the Prince Regent would be pleased to take the cause into his royal consideration, and bestow a grant of crown lands, for a limited period, free of rent; more particularly if barracks, or other buildings, not at present wanted for the public service, could be appropriated for the accommodation of the agricultural attendants; and also for the labourers employed, should such a measure be deemed necessary.

My limited knowledge of crown lands, and of the purposes to which they are at present applied, induces me to decline pointing out any particular place or places; but I beg humbly to express an opinion, that, upon inspection, land may be found, highly applicable to these pur-

poses, not at present appropriated to any important service, producing only a trifling revenue to the crown, and little or no benefit to the public; but which, by being thus appropriated, may be rendered productive of all the advantages pointed out, and ultimately produce an increase of revenue.

With respect to situation, it is to be observed, that land in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis offers the following advantages:—

The creation of employ within a reasonable distance of the present abode of fathers of families and others; and the facility with which produce may be taken to market, and manure procured. It is also presumed, that the vegetation of articles proposed to be most extensively grown, particularly that hearty food lucerne, would be much assisted by the air being highly impregnated with smoke and other nutriment.

On the other hand, it is particularly worthy of observation, that by the principal scene of labour being placed at a reasonable distance from the metropolis, many of the individuals to whom it may be deemed expedient to give employ, will be withdrawn from those temptations and vices, which are too frequently the source of distress to themselves and families.

Thus, although it appears desirable to create employ, to a certain extent, in the immediate vicinity, it is to be wished, in a moral point of

view, that an extensive establishment should be formed, within a reasonable distance, upon, or near, the banks of the Thames. By the advantage of water carriage, great facility would be afforded for distributing supplies on both sides the river, and the expense of carriage greatly reduced to consumers throughout the metropolis, an opportunity being afforded to horse-masters and others to fetch their own supply from convenient stations.

With regard to the benefits to be derived by the public service from such an institution, I beg to observe, that if aid and encouragement were thus afforded by a grant of land, free of rent, for a limited period, the institution would be enabled to supply any demand of the service *by contract* at various stations, including London and Woolwich, at a price not exceeding one half the sum frequently paid at those places for tares and clover, both of which articles are far inferior to lucerne. I have farther to state, that, with this aid and encouragement, the institution would be enabled to contract with the service yearly, to take in to keep, and get into good condition, any number of young and rest horses, at the low price of sixpence per head per day.

Such are the general outlines and suggestions which I have the honour of submitting to the consideration of Your Royal Highness. I for-

bear to enter into farther details at present, but cannot refrain from remarking, that, as the necessities of the poor of the metropolis are great, from the want of work, so are the means of thus creating available employ extensive; and although the sum required to execute these designs, upon an extended scale, must be considerable, yet is the stay of our hope trust-worthy; for it is founded on the discernment and benevolence of those whose spirit has never slackened when exertion was evidently necessary, and whose hearts have never yet been found closed against the appeal of the industrious poor!

The motives which induced me to decline adding my name to *The Antidote to Distress*, equally operate here; but a communication I shall do myself the honour of addressing to Your Royal Highness through your official department, will furnish the necessary information, and place my future endeavours in this cause at the command of Your Royal Highness and the public.

I have the honour to remain
Your Royal Highness's
Obedient humble Servant,
FARMER MEANWELL.

THE ANTIDOTE TO DISTRESS.

EXTRACT from THE FARMER'S JOURNAL of
February 24, 1817.

WE have had a pamphlet put into our hands, entitled *The Antidote to Distress*, containing suggestions for the employment of the poor, &c. and as we have ever been strong advocates for employment, as the most sound, rational, and beneficial relief that can be afforded to the unemployed who are able to work, every treatise that enforces that principle has a claim on our attention. We have, therefore, perused this little tract with a considerable share of pleasure. It is the work of a man who seems practically conversant with husbandry and rural affairs; and we are convinced, that of the many hints that it contains, some must be new, and all interesting, to both Owners and Occupiers of Land. Without derogating from the importance of either manufactures or commerce, he shews, that without successful agriculture neither the one nor the other can flourish. He suggests means of restoring and upholding agriculture; he recommends draining, drill husbandry, and the creation on the spot of artificial amendment by means of fire. He enters rather largely into the general parochial system of relieving and maintaining the poor, many parts of which he gives well-founded reasons for condemning. He recommends the extended culture of Lucerne, as being, from his own experience, the most profitable acreable green-food production, and the most wholesome, in the round of farming. Our limits do not allow us to advert to all the topics the author touches on, nor to dilate on any; but whoever reads it, will be convinced that the writer possesses a benevolent heart, as well as a fair portion of knowledge of the subjects he handles.

EDITOR.

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSION ON THE

PROBLEMS OF THE

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR THE YEAR 1900.

BY JAMES R. HARRIS,

Chairman of the Commission.

WITH AN APPENDIX OF REPORTS AND PAPERS

BY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE

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UNITED STATES.

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